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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2507
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2448
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 5364
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 2302
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 1955
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 2450
RUEABND/DEA HQS WASHINGTON DC
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 000103

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/MLS, INR/EAP, INL/AAE
PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/24/2020
TAGS: [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [KCRM](#) [LA](#) [BM](#)
SUBJECT: BURMA: ATTACK ON POLICE PATROL IN GOLDEN TRIANGLE
BORDER AREA

Classified By: Political/Economic Officer Brian Andrews for Reasons 1.4
(b) & (d).

1. (SBU) A variety of Burmese exile and Thai media outlets reported February 22 that Burmese police were attacked on February 20 while on boat patrol on the Mekong River along the Burma-Thailand-Laos border.

2. (C) Post's Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Attache confirmed that on February 20 a joint patrol consisting of seven officers from the Wan Pone police station in Shan state, three officers from Wan Pone Anti-Narcotics Task Force, two soldiers from the people's militia (local militia under the Army's control) and three boat drivers (15 persons total) embarked on a patrol in three boats along the Mekong River bordering Laos. At 12:00, an armed group attacked the patrol, leaving 10 dead, two injured, and three missing. The two injured officers, Police Second Lt. Sein Hlaing and Police Private Ki Bu, are recovering at a Rangoon hospital. Both are expected to survive, although one remains in intensive care. The GOB believes fugitive drug trafficker Sai Naw Kham's group is responsible for the attack. (Note: Our DEA Attache believes this is a likely explanation, and that the attack was probably a retaliation for an earlier Burmese police drug bust in Tachilek. End note.) Burmese authorities believe the attackers escaped the scene of the shooting in boats and fled into Laos.

3. (C) According to a statement from Police Second Lt. Sein Hlaing, his patrol observed suspicious activities on an island in the Mekong and when they disembarked to investigate, some of the suspects fled. The patrol teams searched the island and encountered about 30 attackers who fired on the patrol. (Note: Press accounts stated the attackers used 40 mm grenade launchers and small arms to attack the patrol. End note.) Laos authorities have been cooperating with the GOB Border Committee to search the Laos side of the border, where the two survivors and three corpses were found.
DINGER